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IN THE CLAIMS

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1.   (ONCE AMENDED) A secure on-line printing method, comprising [the steps of]:

establishing a communication link between a first computer and a second computer;

executing a [print] client software on said first computer[.], wherein said client [print] software [initiating] initiates a continuous communication link between said first computer and said second computer [using a dynamic password];

[verifying said dynamic password for] terminating said [printing] client software when said communication link is not continuous;

[said print software] sending a request [for a print/authorization] from said client software to said second computer; and

[said second computer] sending [a permission and] value-bearing information from said second computer to said first computer in response to said request, while said communication link is continuous.

2.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 1 wherein said [permission and] value-bearing information [are] is used for printing an image [while said communication link is continuous].

3.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 2 wherein [said step of said print software sending a request includes encrypting] said request comprises encrypted data.

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    4.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 3 wherein said [step of second computer sending a permission and information includes encrypting said permission] value-bearing item information comprises encrypted data.

    5.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

    6.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [5] 3 wherein said value-bearing information comprises an image of a postal [indicia] indicium.

    7.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 6 wherein said request [for said print authorization includes] comprises a postage amount.

    8.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

    9.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

    10.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [9] 1 wherein said [step of said printing software] sending [a] said request [for a print authorization] is in response to a command from a user.

    11.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

    12.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [11] 7 wherein said second computer comprises a database containing user information.

    13.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 12 wherein said user information comprises financial information associated with said [of a] user.

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14.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 13 wherein said [step of second computer] sending [a permission to said first computer in] a request [response] to said second computer further comprises [request further comprises the steps of: said second computer] accessing said user information to verify [a] fund availability to cover said postage amount.

15.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

16.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

17.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

18.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [17] 14 wherein said [step of printing an indicia] value-bearing information comprises [the step of:] disabling [a] the print spooler of [said] a printer connected to said first computer.

19.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 18 further comprising [the step of] said [print] client software sending a print command to said printer when said communication link disconnects.

20.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [5] 1 wherein said value-bearing information comprise [an image of a] ticket information.

21.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 20 wherein said request [for said print authorization includes] comprises a ticket price.

22.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

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23.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [22] 1 wherein said [step of] second computer [sending] sends a permission to said first computer in response to said request, [further comprises the steps of:] said second computer accessing a user's financial information to verify funds availability. [to cover said ticket price.]

24.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [5] 1 wherein said value-bearing information comprise [an image of a] check information.

25.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 24 wherein said request [for said print authorization includes] comprises a check amount.

26.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

27.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [26] 1 further comprising: [wherein said step of second computer sending a permission to said first computer in response to said request further comprises the steps of]:
        [said second computer] accessing a user's financial information to verify funds availability to cover said [check amount] value-bearing information;
        sending a permission to said first computer.

28.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [5] 1 wherein said value-bearing information comprises [image of a] coupon information.

29.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 28 wherein said request [for said print authorization includes] comprises a coupon amount.

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30.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

31.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 1 wherein said information comprises [image of a] certificate _information_.

32.   (ONCE AMENDED) A secure on-line postage metering method comprising [the steps of]:

[a user computer] establishing a communication link _between a user computer and_ [with] a vendor computer;

providing a printer connected to said user computer;

executing an on-line postage metering software on said user computer[;] _wherein_ said on-line postage metering software [initiating an asynchronous header for ensuring] _determines if_ said communication link between said first computer and said second computer is continuous [using a dynamic password],

[verifying said dynamic password using said asynchronous header for]

terminating said on-line postage metering software when said communication link is not continuous;

said on-line postage metering software sending a request for a print authorization [for a postage amount] to said vendor computer;

said vendor computer accessing a database to verify [a] fund availability to cover _said request_ [said postage amount].

said vendor computer sending [a permission and images information] _data elements for a postage indicium_ to said first computer [in] _as a_ response to said request;

said on-line postage metering software sending _a postage indicium graphic associated with said data elements_ [said image information] to said printer [while said communication link is continuous].

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33.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 32 wherein [said step of] said online postage metering software sending a request [includes] comprises encrypting said request.

34.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [33] 32 wherein said [step of said] vendor computer sending [a permission and image information] said response further comprises encrypting said response [includes encrypting said permission].

35.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

36.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [35] 32 further [including] comprising [the step of]:

said on-line postage metering software disabling a print spooler of said printer.

37.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

38.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

39.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [38] 32 wherein [said step of] said on-line postage metering software sending [a] said request for [a] said print authorization is in response to a command from a user

40.   (PLEASE CANCEL)

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41.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [40] 32 further

comprising [the step of] said on-line postage metering software sending a print

cancel command to said printer [when] if said communication link is interrupted.

42.   (ONCE AMENDED) A secure on-line postage management

method comprising [the steps of]:

establishing a secure continuous [and secure] communication link

between a client system and a server system;

said client system processing a user request for [generating] obtaining an

[indicia] indicium;

said client system securely communicating said user request to said server

system;

said server system processing said user request;

said server system securely communicating to said client system a

response to said user request;

said client system processing said response to [generate an indicia] obtain

said indicium;

said client system obtaining said indicium [generating an indicia while

communication between said server system and said client system remains

secure and continuous.]

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43.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 42 wherein said [step of] client system [and server system] securely communicating with [one another] said server system comprises [the steps of]:

[registering] authenticating a user by establishing a secured communication link between said client system and said server system and verifying the authenticity of information exchanged;

continuously monitoring said [established] secured communication link [by verifying the] to verify said authenticity of [the] information exchanged.

44.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 43 wherein said [step of registering] authenticating a user comprises [the steps of]:
said client system [selecting] obtaining a password;
securely sending said password to said server system;
said client system issuing a challenge to said server system;
said server system modifying said challenge cryptographically;
said client system verifying said modified challenge for proper authentication of the communication.

45.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 44 wherein said [step of securely] sending said password comprises [the steps of] sending said password to said server using triple Data Encryption Standard (DES) of the SSL Internet protocol, thereby establishing an SSL triple DES communication session between said client system and said server system.

46.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 45 wherein [said step of] said client system issuing a challenge comprises [the step of] issuing a 64 bit random number to said server system.

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47.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 46 wherein [said step of] said server modifying said challenge comprises [the step of] said server system digitally signing said challenge using a cryptographic [device] module and a private key associated with said server system.

48.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 47 wherein [said step of] said client system verifying said modified challenge comprises [the step of] using a public key corresponding to said private key associated with said server system to verify said digital signature of said challenge.

49.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 43 wherein said [step of] continuously monitoring said communication link comprises [the steps of]:

said server system retrieving a password associated with said client system;

generating a message authentication code using said password associated with said client system;

sending said message authentication code and a challenge to said client system;

said client system verifying said authentication code using said challenge and said password associated with said client system.

50.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 49 wherein said [step of] retrieving [a] said password further comprises:

retrieving said password from a database;

decrypting said password if [it] said password is encrypted.

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51.   (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 50 wherein said message authentication code is generated using a password associated with said client system.

52.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 42 wherein said secure continuous [and secure] communication link between client system and server system is established through a firewall.

53.   (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 42 wherein said continuous and secure communication between client system and server system is established via the Internet secure sockets layer (SSL) protocol.

54.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 42 wherein [the step of] said server system processing said user request takes place in a public network and a private network included within said server system.

55.   (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 54 wherein said public network processes user requests independently from said private network to protect the integrity of said server system.

56.   (UNCHANGED) The method of claim 42 wherein communication between client system and server system is encrypted.

57.   (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim [56] 42 wherein communication between client system and server system is encrypted by a United States Postal Service compliant cryptographic device.

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58. (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 42 further comprising the step of disabling said client system from [generating] obtaining said [indicia] indicium if said secure and continuous communication between client system and server system is discontinued.

59. (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 54 wherein said private network processes user requests for making payments.

60. (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 59 wherein [the step of] said private network [processing] processes user [request] requests for making payments further comprises [the step of] communicating with a financial management system for verification of availability of funds and fund transfer.

61. (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 42 further comprising [the step of] said server system communicating with the United States Postal Service Central Meter Licensing System (USPS CMLS) for processing of user licensing information.

62. (ONCE AMENDED) The method of claim 61 further comprising [the step of] registering a user.

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63.   (ONCE AMENDED) An on-line postage system for processing of user requests and [generating] obtaining postage indicia comprising:

a client system for interfacing with a user[,];

a server system in continuous and secure communication with said client system, comprising:

a communication server for communicating with client system;

a database server for storing user information;

a transaction server for processing of requests communicated to said server system by said client system;

a firewall for ensuring the integrity of said server system against potential unauthorized access;

a cryptographic device for encrypting communication between said client system and said server system;

a communication link with the United States Postal Service Central Meter Licensing System (USPS CMLS) for licensing of a user;

a communication link with a financial management system for processing user payments.

64.   (ONCE AMENDED) The on-line postage system of claim 63 further comprising a system software down-loadable from [a] said server system to [a] said client system.

65.   (ONCE AMENDED) The on-line postage system of claim 63 wherein said server system is accessible through an Internet portal.

66.   (ONCE AMENDED) The on-line postage system of claim 63 wherein said client system interfaces with [one or more users] at least one user.

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67.   (ONCE AMENDED) The on-line postage system of claim 63 wherein said client system comprises administration software to monitor [one or more] at least one client system[s].

—68. (NEW) The method of claim 42 wherein said client system obtaining said indicium comprises:

maintaining a continuous communication link between said client system and said server system; and

retrieving said indicium from said server system.

--69. (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a continuous communication link between a client system and a server system, wherein said client system comprises client system software;

said client system software, presenting one or more options for submitting at least one payment;

submitting said at least one payment to said server system software while said continuous communication link persists;

adding postage value corresponding to an amount of said at least one payment to a user account. —

--70. (NEW) The method of claim 69 further comprising:
deducting said amount from said user account. --

--71. (NEW) The method of claim 70 wherein said deducting is performed upon authorization from said user. --

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--72. (NEW) The method of claim 69 wherein said payment comprises credit card data. --

--73. (NEW) The method of claim 69 wherein said payment comprises electronic funds transfer data.--

--74. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein, said computer readable program code configured to:

establish a continuous communication link between a client system and a server system, wherein said client system comprises client system software configured to present one or more options for submitting at least one payment;

submit said at least one payment to said server system software while said continuous communication link persists;

credit postage value corresponding to an amount of said at least one payment to a user account.--

--75. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 further comprising computer readable program code configured to deduct said amount from said user account.--

--76. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 wherein said deducting is performed by said computer readable program code upon authorization from said user.--

--77. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 wherein said payment comprises credit card data.--

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--78.   (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 wherein said payment comprises electronic funds transfer data.--

--79.   (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 wherein said continuous communication link utilizes Internet protocols to transfer data.--

--80.   (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 wherein said client system software prohibits transmission if said continuous communication link fails authentication.--

--81.   (NEW) The computer program product of claim 74 wherein data transmitted between said client system software and said server system software comprises encrypted information.--

--82.   (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a first continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system;

obtaining postage meter license data from a user at said client system while said first continuous communication link persists; and

granting a postage meter license upon approval of said data.--

--83.   (NEW) The method of claim 82 wherein said granting occurs during a second communication link. --

--84.   (NEW) The method of claim 82 wherein said granting occurs during said first continuous communication link.--

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—85. (NEW) The method of claim 82 wherein said server system software manages said data associated with said postage meter license.—

—86. (NEW) The method of claim 82 wherein said granting is performed by said server system software.—

—87. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:
a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein, said computer readable program code configured to:
establish a first continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system;
obtain postage meter license data from a user at said client system while said first continuous communication link persists; and
grant a postage meter license upon approval of said data.—

—88. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 87 wherein said computer readable program code configured to grant said postage meter license upon approval of said data executes during a second communication link.—

—89. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 87 wherein said computer readable program code configured to grant said postage meter license upon approval of said data executes during said first continuous communication link.—

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--90.   (NEW) The computer program product of claim 87 wherein said server system comprises server system software for managing said data associated with said postage meter license.--

--91.   (NEW) The computer program product of claim 90 wherein said computer readable program code configured to grant said postage meter license upon approval of said data executes on said server system software.--

--92.   (NEW) A system comprising:
    a client system comprising client system software;
    said client system software configured to establish a continuous communication link with a server system and obtain postage meter license data from a user at said client system while said first continuous communication link persists;
    said server system configured to grant a postage meter license upon approval of said data.--

--93.   (NEW) The system claim 92 wherein said server system configured to grant said postage meters license performs said grant during a second communication link.--

--94.   (NEW) The system of claim 92 wherein said server system configured to grant said postage meters license performs said grant during said first continuous communication link.--

--95.   (NEW) The system of claim 92 wherein said server system software manages said data associated with said postage meter license.--

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--96.   (NEW) The system of claim 92 wherein said granting is performed by said server system software.--

--97.   (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a first continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system;

obtaining a postage meter license command from a user at said client system while said continuous communication link persists;

executing said postage meter license command.

--98.   (NEW) The method of claim 97 wherein said postage meter license command comprises an application for a postage meter license.--

--99.   (NEW) The method of claim 97 wherein said postage meter license command requests a license status associated with said postage meter license.--

--100. (NEW) The method of claim 97 wherein said postage meter license command enables said user to update a postage meter license.--

--101. (NEW) The method of claim 97 wherein said server system comprises server system software and said server system software performs said executing said postage meter license command.--

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--102. (NEW) The method of claim 97 further comprising:

transmitting said postage meter command to said server system;

--103. (NEW) The method of claim 102 wherein said server system comprises a central management licensing system.--

--104. (NEW) The method of claim 103 further comprising:

obtaining a result from said central management licensing system.--

--105. (NEW) The method of claim 104 wherein said result comprises approval of said postage meter license.--

--106. (NEW) The method of claim 105 further comprising:

communicating license information to a client system software when said result comprises said approval.--

--107. (NEW) The method of claim 104 wherein said result comprises denial of said postage meter license. --

--108. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein, said computer readable program code configured to:

establish a first continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system;

obtain a postage meter license command from a user at said client system while said continuous communication link persists;

execute said postage meter license command.--

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--109. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 108 wherein said postage meter license command comprises an application for a postage meter license.--

--110. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 108 wherein said postage meter license command requests a license status associated with said postage meter license.--

--111. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 108 wherein said postage meter license command enables said user to update a postage meter license.--

--112. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 108 wherein said server system comprises server system software and said server system software performs said executing said postage meter license command.--

--113. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 108 further comprising computer readable program code configured to transmit said postage meter command to said server system.--

--114. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 113 wherein said server system comprises a central management licensing system.--

--115. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 114 further comprising computer readable program code configured to obtain a result from said central management licensing system.--

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--116. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 115 wherein said result comprises approval of said postage meter license.--

--117. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 115 further comprising:

communicating license information to said client system software when said result comprises said approval.--

--118. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 115 wherein said result comprises denial of said postage meter license.--

--119. (NEW) A system comprising:
a client system comprising client system software;
said client system software configured to establish a continuous communication link with a server system;
' said server system configured to accept a postage meter license command from a user at said client system while said continuous communication link persists and execute said postage meter license command.--

--120. (NEW) The system of claim 119 wherein said postage meter license command comprises an application for a postage meter license.--

--121. (NEW) The system of claim 119 wherein said postage meter license command requests a license status associated with said postage meter license.--

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--122. (NEW) The system of claim 119 wherein said postage meter license command enables said user to update a postage meter license.--

--123. (NEW) The system of claim 119 wherein said server system comprises server system software and said server system software performs said executing said postage meter license command.--

--124. (NEW) The system of claim 119 further comprising:
said client system transmitting said postage meter command to said server system;

--125. (NEW) The system of claim 124 wherein said server system comprises a central management licensing system.--

--126. (NEW) The system of claim 125 further comprising:
said client system obtaining a result from said central management licensing system.--

--127. (NEW) The system of claim 126 wherein said result comprises approval of said postage meter license.--

--128. (NEW) The system of claim 126 further comprising:
said central management licensing system communicating license information to said client system software when said result comprises said approval.--

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--129. (NEW) The system of claim 126 wherein said result comprises denial of said postage meter license.--

--130. (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a first continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system;

said server system software, providing value bearing data to said at least one client system via said continuous communication link;

monitoring activity on said server system software via administration system software.--

--131. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said administration system software monitors a financial status associated with said at least one client systems.--

--132. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said value bearing data comprises tickets.--

--133. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said value bearing data comprises checks.--

--134. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said value bearing data comprises coupons.--

--135. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said value bearing data comprises certificates.--

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—136. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said administration software performs statistical analysis pertaining to transactions with said server system.—

—137. (NEW) The method of claim 130 wherein said administration software obtains status information associated with postage meter licenses.—

—138. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein said computer readable program code configured to:

establish a first continuous communication link between a client system and a server system;

provide value bearing data to said at least one client system via said continuous communication link;

monitor activity on said server system software via an administration module.—

—139. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said administration module monitors a financial status associated with said at least one client systems.--

--140. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said value bearing data comprises tickets.--

--141. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said value bearing data comprises checks.--

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—142. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said value bearing data comprises coupons.—

—143. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said value bearing data comprises certificates.—

--144. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said administration module performs statistical analysis pertaining to transactions with said server system.—

--145. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 138 wherein said administration software obtains status information associated with postage meter licenses.--

--146. (NEW) A system comprising:

a client system configured to establish a first continuous communication link between said client system and a server system;

said server system configured to provide value bearing data to said client system via said continuous communication link;

an administration module configured to monitor activity on said server system.--

--147. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said administration module monitors a financial status associated with said at least one client systems.--

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--148. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said value bearing data comprises tickets.--

--149. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said value bearing data comprises checks.--

--150. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said value bearing data comprises coupons.--

--151. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said value bearing data comprises certificates.--

--152. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said administration module performs statistical analysis pertaining to transactions with said server system software.--

--153. (NEW) The system of claim 146 wherein said administration module obtains status information associated with postage meter licenses.--

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--154. (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system comprising server system software;

said server system software, obtaining a print request while said continuous communication link persists;

providing postal indicia data to said client system software via said continuous communication link in response to said print request;

communicating with at least one postal service system.--

--155. (NEW) The method of claim 154 wherein said communicating further comprises obtaining mailing data.--

--156. (NEW) The method of claim 155 wherein said mailing data comprises purchasing information.--

--157. (NEW) The method of claim 155 wherein said mailing data comprises licensing information.--

--158. (NEW) The method of claim 155 wherein said server system software generates statistical reports comprising information about the use of said server system software.--

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--159. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein said computer readable program code configured to:

establish a continuous communication link between a client system comprising client system software and a server system comprising server system software;

obtain a print request while said continuous communication link persists;

provide postal indicia data to said client system software via said continuous communication link in response to said print request;

communicate with at least one postal service system.--

--160. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 159 wherein said communicating further comprises obtaining mailing data.--

--161. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 160 wherein said mailing data comprises purchasing information.--

--162. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 160 wherein said mailing data comprises licensing information.--

--163. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 159 wherein said server system software generates statistical reports comprising information about the use of said server system software.--

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--164. (NEW) A system comprising:

a server system computer configured to establish a continuous communication link between said server system and a client system;

said server system configured to obtain a print request from said client system while said continuous communication link persists;

said server configured to provide postal indicia data to said client system software via said continuous communication link in response to said print request;

said server configured to communicate with at least one postal service system.--

--165. (NEW) The system of claim 164 wherein said communicating further comprises obtaining mailing data.--

--166. (NEW) The system of claim 165 wherein said mailing data comprises purchasing information.--

--167. (NEW) The system of claim 165 wherein said mailing data comprises licensing information.--

--168. (NEW) The system of claim 164 wherein said server system software generates statistical reports comprising information about the use of said server system software.--

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--169.   (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a continuous communication link between a client system and a server system;

obtaining mailing information during said continuous communication link;

comparing said mailing information to a set of addresses.--

--170. (NEW) The method of claim 169 wherein said obtaining said mailing information occurs at said client system.--

--171. .(NEW) The method of claim 169 wherein said comparing step validates a postal code associated with said mailing information.--

--172. (NEW) The method of claim 171 wherein said postal code comprises a ZIP code.--

--173. (NEW) The method of claim 171 wherein said postal code comprises a ZIP+4+2+1 code.--

--174. (NEW) The method of claim 171 wherein said postal code is corrected based on information in a postal code database.--

--175. (NEW) The method of claim 169 further comprising:

determining during said comparing step if said mailing information is valid;

returning a result to said client system.--

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--176. (NEW) The method of claim 169 wherein said server system accesses said set of addresses on behalf of said client system.--

--177. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein, said computer readable program code configured to:

establish a continuous communication link between a client system and a server system;

obtain mailing information during said continuous communication link;

compare said mailing information to a set of addresses.--

--178. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 177 wherein said computer readable program code configured to obtain said mailing information executes at said client system.--

--179. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 177 wherein said computer readable program code configured to compare said mailing information to said set of addresses validates a postal code associated with said mailing information.--

--180. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 179 wherein said postal code comprises a ZIP code.--

--181. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 179 wherein said postal code comprises a ZIP+4+2+1 code.--

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--182. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 179 wherein said postal code is corrected based on information in a postal code database.--

--183. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 177 further comprising computer readable program code configured to:

determine during said comparing step if said mailing information is valid;

return a result to said client system.--

--184. (NEW) A method comprising:

establishing a continuous communication link between a client system and a server system;

obtaining mailing information during said continuous communication link;

providing postal rate information based on said mailing information during said continuous communication link;

providing postal indicia data to said client system software via said continuous communication link, wherein said postal indicia data has a value corresponding to said postal rate information.--

--185. (NEW) The method of claim 184 wherein said mailing information comprises address data.--

--186. (NEW) The method of claim 184 wherein said mailing information comprises a service type.--

--187. (NEW) The method of claim 186 wherein said service type is selected by a user.--

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--188. (NEW) The method of claim 186 wherein said client system calculates said postal rate information.--

--189. (NEW) The method of claim 184 wherein said postal rate information is based on said service type.--

--190. (NEW) The method of claim 184 wherein said client system software accesses a postal rate table to calculate said postal rate information.--

--191. (NEW) A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein, said computer readable program code configured to:

establish a continuous communication link between a client system and a server system;

obtain mailing information during said continuous communication link;

provide postal rate information based on said mailing information during said continuous communication link:

provide postal indicia data to said client system software via said continuous communication link, wherein said postal indicia data has a value corresponding to said postal rate information.--

--192. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 191 wherein said mailing information comprises address data.--

--193. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 191 wherein said mailing information comprises a service type.--

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--194. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 191 wherein said service type is selected by a user.--

--195. (NEW) The computer program product of claim 191 wherein said client system calculates said postal rate information.--

--196. (NEW) The method of claim 191 wherein said postal rate information is based on said service type.--

--197. (NEW) The method of claim 191 wherein said client system software accesses a postal rate table to calculate said postal rate information.--

--198. (NEW) A system for secure processing of value-bearing items (VBIs) in a computer network comprising:

a plurality of user terminals coupled to a computer network;

a database coupled to said network and remote from said plurality of user terminals for storing information about one or more users using said plurality of user terminals; and

a server system coupled to said network comprising a cryptographic device for performing secure VBI functions utilizing said information stored in said database.--

--199. (NEW) The system of claim 198, further comprising a plurality of postal security device data stored in said database for ensuring authenticity of each of said one or more users, wherein each postal security device data is related to one of said users and said postal security device data related to said

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one of said users is loaded into said cryptographic device when said one of said

users requests to print a value-bearing item.--

--200. (NEW) The system of claim 198, further comprising a plurality of

postal security device data stored in said database for ensuring authority of each

of said one or more users, wherein each postal security device data is related to

one of said users and said postal security device data related to said one of said

users is loaded into said cryptographic device when said one of said users

requests to print a value-bearing item.--

--201. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said database comprises

data for creating indicium, account maintenance, and revenue protection.--

--202. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said value-bearing item is

a mail piece.--

--203. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said cryptographic device

generates a digital signature in response to a user request for printing a value-

bearing item.--

--204. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said cryptographic device

encrypts the requested information in response to a user request for printing a

value-bearing item.--

--205. (NEW) The system of claim 202, wherein said cryptographic device

generates data sufficient to print a postal indicium in compliance with postal

service regulations on said mail piece.--

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--206. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said value-bearing item is a ticket.--

--207. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein a bar code is printed on said value-bearing item.--

--208. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said value bearing item is a coupon.--

--209. (NEW) The system of claim 199, wherein said postal security device data comprises an ascending register value, a descending register value, a respective cryptographic device ID, and an indicium key certificate serial number.--

--210. (NEW) The system of claim 199, wherein said postal security device data comprises a private key, a public key, and a public key certificate, wherein said private key is used to sign device status responses and said value-bearing item which, in conjunction with said public key certificate, demonstrates that said postal security device and said value-bearing item are authentic.--

--211. (NEW) The system of claim 210, wherein said private key is used to sign device status responses.--

--212. (NEW) The system of claim 210, wherein said value-bearing item in conjunction with said public key certificate, authenticates said postal security device and said value-bearing item.--

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—213. (NEW) The system of claim 198, wherein said cryptographic device protects data using a stored secret.--

—214. (NEW) The system of claim 213, wherein said secret is a password.—

--215. (NEW) The system of claim 213, wherein said secret is a public and private key pair.--

—216. (NEW) A method for secure processing of value-bearing items (VBIs) in a computer network comprising a plurality of user terminals comprising:

storing information about one or more users using a plurality of user terminals in a database coupled to a network and remote from said plurality of user terminals; and

performing secure VBI functions utilizing said information stored in said database by a cryptographic device remote from said plurality of user terminals.-

—217. (NEW) The method of claim 216 further comprising storing a plurality of postal security device data in said database, wherein each of said security device data is related to one of said users.--

--218. (NEW) The method of claim 217 further comprising loading a postal security device data related to said cryptographic device when said one of said users requests to print a value-bearing item.--

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--219. (NEW) The method of claim 216 further comprising authenticating the identity of each user.--

--220. (NEW) The method of claim 219 further comprising verifying that the identified user is authorized to print a value-bearing item.--

--221. (NEW) The method of claim 216, the value bearing item is a mail piece.--

--222. (NEW) The method of claim 216, wherein said cryptographic device generates a digital signature in response to a user request for printing a value-bearing item.--

--223. (NEW) The method of claim 216, wherein said cryptographic device encrypts the requested information in response to a user request for printing a value-bearing item.--

--224. (NEW) The method of claim 221, wherein said cryptographic device generates data sufficient to print a postal indicium in compliance with postal service regulations on said mail piece.--

--225. (NEW) The method of claim 216, wherein said value-bearing item is a ticket.--

--226. (NEW) The method of claim 216, wherein a bar code is printed on said value-bearing item.--

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--227. (NEW) The method of claim 216, further comprising printing a coupon.--

--228. (NEW) A method for secure processing of a value bearing item on a computer network having a plurality of users using a plurality of computer terminals for connecting to said network and a plurality of cryptographic devices remote from said plurality of users and coupled to said network, each cryptographic device executing a plurality of postal security device transactions, the method comprising:

requesting by a user authorization for printing a value-bearing item;

assigning a postal security device data to the requesting user, wherein said postal security device data may be executed on any of said plurality of cryptographic devices;

authenticating the identity of said user;

granting the requested print if the identity of said user is authenticated; and

printing said value-bearing item.--

--229. (NEW) The method of claim 228, further comprising storing data for creating indicium, account maintenance, and revenue protection.--

--230. (NEW) The method of claim 228, wherein the value-bearing item is a mail piece.--

--231. (NEW) The method of claim 228, wherein said cryptographic device generates a digital signature in response to a user request for printing a value-bearing item.--

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--232. (NEW) The method of claim 228, wherein said cryptographic device encrypts the requested information in response to a user request for printing a value-bearing item.--

--233. (NEW) The method of claim 230, wherein said cryptographic device generates data sufficient to print a postal indicium in compliance with postal service regulations on said mail piece.--

--234. (NEW) The method of claim 228, wherein said value-bearing item is a ticket.--

--235. (NEW) The method of claim 228, wherein a bar code is printed on said value-bearing item.--

--236. (NEW) The method of claim 228, further comprising printing an image.--

--237. (NEW) The method of claim 228, wherein said postal security device data comprises an ascending register value, a descending register value, a respective cryptographic device ID, and an indicium key certificate serial number. --

--238. (NEW) The method of claim 228, further comprising using a private key to sign device status responses and said value-bearing item which, in conjunction with a public key certificate, demonstrates that said postal security device and said value-bearing item are authentic.--

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